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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 20 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In the context of Portugal's chairmanship of the Community of Democracies, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the United Nations Democracy Caucus of the Community of Democracies on the Human Rights Council election.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly under agenda item 113 (d).

(*Signed*) João **Salgueiro**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 20 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the United Nations Democracy Caucus of the Community of Democracies on the Human Rights Council election

The members of the Community of Democracies, gathered as the United Nations Democracy Caucus, reaffirm the commitment contained in the Santiago Ministerial Commitment (A/59/814, annex) and the Bamako Ministerial Consensus (A/62/662, annex) to support the candidacies of countries contributing effectively to the promotion and protection of democracy and human rights worldwide in bodies focused on elements of democratic governance, such as the Human Rights Council.

On the eve of the third election for the Human Rights Council, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, in which the Assembly called upon all Member States to "take into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments" when electing members to the Council, we appeal to the membership of the United Nations to favour those States which have demonstrated a genuine commitment to human rights, both in practice and in their pledges.

We reiterate out belief in the importance of the composition of the Council to its credibility and effectiveness as a human rights body. We are encourage by the fact that almost all candidates have made voluntary pledges and commitments and reiterate the importance of electing to the Council only those Member States whose commitment to human rights has also been demonstrated in practice.